



# News Release

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## **Influenza death a reminder of importance of flu vaccine**

*Seasonal flu vaccine is available and can save lives*

**OLYMPIA** -- A recent influenza-related death of a person in Spokane County is a sad reminder that flu seasons, while unpredictable, are always serious. Flu season is quickly approaching and public health officials are urging people to get a flu vaccine as soon as it is available in your area. Everyone, including pregnant women, can benefit from an annual influenza vaccine, and for many people it is critical.

Flu vaccine, now available for children and adults aged 6 months and older, is the best protection against flu illness. While the vaccine isn't a guarantee against getting ill, people who are vaccinated and do get sick usually have a shorter, milder illness.

[Influenza](#) can strike anyone and is especially dangerous for young children and the elderly, who are at greater risk for complications from the flu. At best, the flu can result in fever, cough, and a few days lost from work or school. At its worst, flu can lead to pneumonia, hospitalization, and even death. Every year thousands of people in the United States die from flu-related illness and thousands more are hospitalized.

"People of all ages should get vaccinated before flu season is in full swing," says Dr. Scott Lindquist, State Communicable Disease Epidemiologist for the Washington State Department of Health. "Though flu season often peaks in winter, it's unpredictable, and we urge people to get protected now."

Washington State's Childhood Vaccine Program provides vaccine to all kids less than 19 years of age in Washington at no cost. Providers may charge an administration fee, or office visit fee, but parents may request this fee be waived. This flu season, nasal spray vaccine is not being recommended for children and is not included in the state's no-cost program.

The [Department of Health website](http://doh.wa.gov) (doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*.  
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